

San Francisco

"So I find myself back in California," sings Quasi. And so I do. I spend half my life trying to get here, I spend the rest trying to get away. But here I finally am, and perhaps it's time to simply give in.

California is large; it contains multitudes. Locals claim the peninsula is so big and irregular that it even contains microclimates — areas with different weather patterns. There is the glorious hill of Alamo Square, near the apartment I stay in, from which you can see the houses featured in the opening credits of *Full House* and watch the city stretch out below you. As you cross the street to head to the park, if you turn your head in the middle to watch for cars, you see a glorious road roll downwards, ending at a monumental city hall building, a glowing golden dome.

Or if you climb Twin Peaks, the hill overlooking Noe Valley, one night, the streetlights make the buildings below look like cardboard backdrops and a rolling grid of points of light sweeps out behind it, hills culminating in the tall buildings that make up the San Francisco skyline.

Or there's Valencia street, the oddball mix of pirate supply shops, burger joints, bike stores, hipster coffee houses and breakfast places, alongside restaurants of every ethnicity.

And, of course, the city is filled with brilliant and fun people. Marxist sex columnists, investigative technology reporters, self-experimenting tenured professors, crimefighting lawyers, activist technologists, startup founders, hackers, hipsters. I could hang out with these people forever.

Then one morning I awoke to find three of my favorite people inviting me to find a brilliant new place in the city and be their roommate. It's a hard offer to resist, no matter the city. It's the day before I leave for my Christmas trip to Europe and I promise myself that before I go I'll see the Sunset. I finish up all my work tasks and run as fast as I can to catch the streetcar that winds its way through the city, past pastel houses on rolling hills, past video stores and laundromats, past cafes and bakeries, past offices and parks.

And then we hit the end of the peninsula, a road and then a hill and then a beach. And there it is, [just like in LA](#), the sun setting right before me, casting a glow over the beach. And the fog is rolling off the hills in the nice lines that you thought only existed in heavily photoshopped pictures and you watch the waves on the beach roll up to your feet and the beauty overtakes you and you fall back against the hill and there's really only one thing you can say, even if it's to no one but yourself:

"Alright, San Francisco. I concede. You win."

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